

Student Name:

Date:

## *Inherit the Wind* Advice Column or Correspondence

### A Narrative Letter Writing Project

In an advice column, a person writes in to a newspaper to ask for help on a personal problem or a troubling situation. Correspondence includes letters that are sent to a particular person. This writing project is worth **50 points** and **is due on Friday, February 23, 2018.** The letter must be typed and fit the English guidelines.

Imagine you are one of the characters from *Inherit the Wind* that has a MAJOR CONFLICT with another person: **Rachel, Bert, Hornbeck, Drummond, and Brady.**

**Write a letter** to the Hillsboro Helper, an advice columnist at The Hillsboro Herald, **or** the Baltimore Backstop, an advice columnist at The Baltimore Herald, asking for help with what to do. Here are their addresses: Hillsboro Helper, The Hillsboro Herald, 123 Main Street, Hillsboro, Tennessee 01234. The Baltimore Backstop, The Baltimore Backstop, 123 Main Street, Baltimore, Maryland 01234

**OR**

**Write a letter** to the person with whom you are in conflict.

EITHER LETTER MUST BE written in **FIRST PERSON, as the AUTHENTIC CHARACTER IN CONFLICT.**

- **INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH:** Use specific information from the text to give **CONTEXT** and **BACKGROUND INFORMATION** about your job, position in town, your relationship to the person that you are in conflict with, and where you are from or the community where you live.
- **BODY PARAGRAPHS (1-2):** Use **TWO SCENES** and **RELATED EVIDENCE** from the text to **explain the conflict or problems that you face. Write about the emotions that YOU feel and how those emotions impact YOUR LIFE. Consider different dimensions of the conflict: man v. man, man v. himself/herself, man v. society.**
- **CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH:** Use specific information from the text to explain what choices you have and the potential outcomes. Give examples of the different decisions that you might make to resolve the conflict.

**Support your situation with at least TWO to THREE SCENES and SIX KEY QUOTES or STAGE DIRECTIONS from ACT ONE and/or ACT TWO (up to the end of scene I). Be sure to INCLUDE PAGE NUMBERS and use in-text citation.**

Here is a model for you to review:

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February 13, 2018

Baltimore Herald  
The Baltimore Backstop  
123 Main Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 01234

Dear Baltimore Herald,

I am jus' a boy of thirteen, and half the time I am running around all playful and barefoot dangling worms in my friends' faces. My home is known as "Heavenly Hillsboro" because we are big on religion (Lawrence and Lee 15). And, boy do I mean BIG. Our minister, Reverend Brown, scares the daylights outta me and my friends. Most of my teachers and kinfolk are so big on religion that they don't want us learning no other crazy, big city ideas. They jus' say that "[a]ll the answers to [ ] questions [about where we came from, where we are, where we're going] are in the Bible" (Lawrence and Lee 34). But Mr. Cates, my biology teacher, taught us that "man wasn't just stuck here like a geranium in a flower pot" (Lawrence and Lee 8). Mr. Cates says "that living comes from a long miracle, it didn't just happen in seven days" (Lawrence and Lee 8). His way of thinking makes a lot of sense to me, but what do I know, since I ain't no scientist. And if I start to think to myself or just ask myself questions, my head starts a spinnin'.

Most of my kin and the people in town, don't like Mr. Cates; they think he's a sinner. And I would hate for them to think I am a sinner, too. But I do like those funny radical ways that he thinks. Science is very cool. I love worms and learning about blobs of jelly. Plus, Mr. Cate's got cool equipment like microscopes that we can use to look at dirt. It's not that I don't believe in God. I

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like going to church on Sundays. It's just that Mr. Cates makes my mind start to spin around and tie itself in knots.

Some people say that Cates is a criminal. Cuz' Hillsboro has a law that makes it a crime to teach Darwin's *Origin of Species*, so the town jailed Mr. Cates. And now, our town has become a "battlefield" and some important big-wig named Matthew Harrison Brady has come to our town to make sure Cates is convicted. People are saying that "if the biggest man in the country – next to the President, maybe – if Matthew Harrison Brady comes here to tell the whole world how wrong [Cates is]" then Mr. Cates must have done something terrible (Lawrence and Lee 8). I'm jus' a kid but it seems to me that thinkin' can't be too wrong. After all God gave us a brain for that there reason.

Last week, I made a whopper of a mistake when I teased a girl named Melinda with a worm. I "dangle[d] it in front of her face" and even told her that she "was a worm once!" (Lawrence and Lee 4). Honestly, I wanted to impress "Lindy" with some fancy talk about science. But Melinda was "skeered" of the worm and even more "skeered" of my crazy ideas. I should have stopped right then, but no. I went ahead and told her about evolution so she could see how smart I am. I 'splained that there was a time "[w]hen the whole world was covered with water, there was nuthin' but worms and blobs of jelly. And [she] and [her] whole family was worms!" (Lawrence and Lee 4). Well, that really got her in a tizzy. Melinda called my ideas "sinful talk" and threatened to get her pa to "wash [my] mouth out with soap" (Lawrence and Lee 4). Then things just spun outta control, and exploded from there, when I joked, "Ahhh, your old man's a

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monkey!” (Lawrence and Lee 5). Now, the whole town has heard that I talk about evolution, and I’m worried that my big mouth could have gotten me into hot water.

Being on Mr. Cates’ side might cause me a whole world of problems. In this town, asking questions about how the world was created will put me “on the [wrong] side of things” (Lawrence and Lee 9). Here in Hillsboro, most people bow down to our minister, Reverend Brown. And who can blame them? At last night’s prayer meeting, Reverend Brown got our whole community so worked up and asked God to curse Bert and anyone who agrees with him. I don’t want to have Reverend Brown “call down the same curse” on me just because I can’t help being curious and talkin’ bout what Cates taught me (Lawrence and Lee 66). At the prayer meeting, Rachel tried to stop her dad from praying to harm Mr. Cates. But no way! Reverend Brown didn’t stop – he continued to pray that God “[s]trike [her] down” too (Lawrence and Lee 66). Yikes! Reverend Brown is scary. His daughter liked to have fainted dead away.

I know it’s wrong to call names and of course, I spilled the beans when I called Melinda’s pa an ape. But I have bigger problems than that. Tomorrow, Mr. Brady plans to call me as a witness for the prosecution. My stomach is all twisty about testifying. The way I see it, I got two choices, and neither one smells sweet. Tell the truth or fib? If I stick by Mr. Cates and tell the truth about my ideas about evolution, it might be a trainwreck. If I say that I like his wacky science ideas and think it’s cool to learn about science in school, what might happen to me? If they arrested Cates for simply teaching his ideas about flower pots and seeds, what will happen to me if I side with him? I might end up in a jail cell myself, lumped together with poor old Mr. Cates who everyone

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is sayin' is "[w]orse than a murderer" (Lawrence and Lee 50). I don't want to "inherit the wind" of Reverend Brown (Lawrence and Lee 68) or even inherit a whoopin' from Melinda's pa. I don't want the town to treat me like a "pariah" or like a person with "horns growing out of my head" (Lawrence and Lee 55 and 50). I am just a little kid and not ready for all that chaos. Reverend Brown might ask the town to turn against me. Testifying in court means that I gotta swear on the Bible to tell the truth. I know it's a sin to lie, but what if a lie gets me out of a pickle? If I lie and say that I think that evolution is the Devil's word, won't God punish me for lying? And will Mr. Cates give me an F for fibbing? What should I do?

Sincerely,

Potential Pariah in Training